Bilateral Defence Cooperation between India and Iran

4826. SHRIMATI N. P. DURGA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that recently, the basic naval manoeuvres and exercises in the Arabian Sea between India and Iran took place to increase bilateral defence cooperation;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether India extended any military cooperation to Iran; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) Indian Naval Ships & Iranian ships participated in the Passing Exercises (PASSEX) on 10th March, 2003 at Mumbai. Such exercises are carried out between navies during goodwill visits and involve the visiting ships & ships of the host Navy. These are basic communication & procedural exercises to promote goodwill & understanding of each other's communication drills & procedures.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Building of Credible Deterrence

4827. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indian Army is clamouring for a rapid overall modernisation to ensure credible deterrence against hostile Pakistan;

(b) whether the combat ratio with Pakistan has declined recently; and

(c) if so, the details of the proposed reforms the Defence Ministry propose to undertake?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES) : (a) Combat preparedness and building an effective and credible deterrence to meet all threats, through modernisation of the Defence Forces, including Army is a continuous process.

(b) and (c) The threats to the country are kept under constant review. Some of the thrust areas of modernisation of the Army are upgradation of major combat systems, improved surveillance and target acquisition capability, enhancement of night fighting capability and induction of improved electronic warfare and information warfare systems.